▲ T-Mobile, Verizon and AT&T phone calls are failing across the US (theverge.com)

321 points by keyi 19 hours ago | hide | past | web | favorite | 182 comments

add comment

▲ mlacks 18 hours ago [–]

Looks to be a tech issue related to the Sprint merger.

That is the current suggestion: (reposted from elsewhere in this thread: https://puck.nether.net/pipermail/outages/2020-June/013124.h...

This is because of an update in the systems from the Sprint side to help merge with T Mobile. That happened from 12am-6am EST and Sprint's systems clashed with T Mobile's. I'm glad I have off today.

reply

> ▲ simplyaccont 13 hours ago [–]
>
> For today was scheduled first migration of chunk of Sprint users to TMobile. Probably something got "misconfigured" at mobile core that causes failures.
>
> reply

> ▲ A4ET8a8uTh0 18 hours ago [–]
>
> If true that would be interesting. Is the merger approval signed, sealed and irreversible?
>
> reply

>> ▲ bingdig 18 hours ago [–]
>>
>> Not irreversible (but the DOJ rarely breaks up already merged companies due to the difficulty of "unscrambling the eggs")!
>>
>> This event could create a reason to block the merger ex post, especially given last week's news that DISH may not buy Boost Mobile from T-Mobile, which was a key provision of the merger to reduce its anti-competitive effects.
>>
>> reply

>>> ▲ SlIX 9 hours ago [–]
>>>
>>> Well, hopefully it doesn't cause reason to block the merger ex post. Disclosure upfront, I'm nothing more than a satisfied T-Mobile customer that switched away a couple of years ago from AT&T. No other interests in this race.
>>>
>>> Sprint was a shambling zombie, and any public policy measure that could be undertaken to make Sprint something other than a shambling zombie, and in particular, into a viable competitor would have rewarded Sprint for well, not being competitive.
>>>
>>> Out of the four major carriers we used to have, we had 2.5 well capitalized competitors with large customer bases and Sprint, a shambling zombie. T-Mobile put together an offer, tendered it to Sprint, and it was accepted, and out of the many ways that Sprint could have been gobbled up by one of its larger and better competitors, T-Mobile serving as daddy to Sprint's mommy was about the best outcome you could have gotten. This puts their customer base, assuming the Sprint customers stay, at relatively equal footing with Verizon and AT&T, and more customers = increased cash flow, and increased cash flow keeps them operating in the black and hopefully with room to invest.

I don't care if we have three or four or five major wireless carriers right now so long as I can be satisfied with one of them where I live and work. T-Mobile's "Uncarrier"-like *lack* of billing shenanigans was one of the things that put them over the edge when I decided to bite the bullet and switch carriers. Also, with StarLink and maybe other systems like it possibly coming online and into service in the next couple of years, I'm not at all convinced it's going to matter that we only have three major "cell carriers" going into the next decade. Let T-Mobile keep all its customers, all of the spectrum they acquired. They paid for it, and I expect them to put it to use on behalf of their customers.

reply

Andrex 15 hours ago [–]

"So... you're telling me there's a chance [the merger won't happen]?" - Lloyd, *Dumb and Dumber*

reply

kossTKR 14 hours ago [–]

What does the Sprint merger have to do with Facebook Messenger in Europe and Instagrams direct message system being down?

Overload because people go there or NSA updating a dragnet system? ;)

reply

noahtallen 14 hours ago [–]

Could be separate problems

reply

kossTKR 14 hours ago [–]

True though i have never in the 10 years i have been on FB had problems with chats, so quite an incredible coincidence..

reply

mynameisvlad 13 hours ago [–]

I get intermittent connectivity issues with Facebook's built in Messenger implementation *all the time*. After a few refreshes, it comes back.

reply

kossTKR 13 hours ago [–]

Interesting, you must have worse infrastructure where you are. I have never had any problems in Scandinavia.

reply

Dirlewanger 17 hours ago [–]

And Verizon's reason?

reply

kelnos 16 hours ago [–]

Do we have confirmation that Verizon is actually having issues, or are people on Verizon trying to call T-Mobile customers, failing, and are blaming their own carrier, Verizon?

reply

sjg007 16 hours ago [–]

I have a Tmobile MVNO and I can call Verizon users but not vice versa. I can also not call any Tmobile number. My wife has Verizon and can't call me but can call others except for Tmobile #s.

reply

leesalminen 16 hours ago [–]

It sounds like the parent knows how to troubleshoot accurately :).

reply

zwily 16 hours ago [–]

Exact same symptoms here.

reply

thoraway1010 16 hours ago [–]

Verizon is fine - the stories saying verizon and ATT down are basically totally garbage.

reply

Throwaway641a 17 hours ago [–]

Right. From the link quoted in the grandparent comment:

> That's not going to esplain [sic] the other carriers' problems, of course, but...

reply

eatbitseveryday 17 hours ago [5 more]

blhack 17 hours ago [–]

What could cause all major cell phone providers to experience outages that began at the same time in the same day?

A solar flare seems unlikely, since WiFi does not seem to be effected (for me at least).

Routing issue maybe?

One possibility: it’s all just T-Mobile, but people are bad at reporting. For instance: if a non technical person tries to call a t-mobile number from their Verizon phone, and experiences an “outage”, they may report this as a problem with their own phone rather than understanding that it was on the receiving end (and knowing to try to call other carriers).

This could also explain problems with Facebook messenger (if the T-Mobile outage is effecting data). It’s not a problem with messenger etc. it’s just that messenger is the service that some T-Mobile customers are trying to use and having it not work. So they report it as a problem with the black box they know as their phone.

That or we are getting hacked. And if that’s the case then buckle in and charge up your ham radios.

reply

adrianpike 17 hours ago [–]

Easy: someone fat-fingered SS7 the same way someone fat-fingered BGP.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signalling_System_No._7 https://blog.cloudflare.com/how-verizon-and-a-bgp-optimizer-...

reply

bogomipz 15 hours ago [–]

No it's not the same at all. A carrier's SS7 configuration does not get propagated out to other carriers.

reply

gwright 10 hours ago [–]

This comment tickled something in my memory:

All Circuits are Busy Now: The 1990 AT&T Long Distance Network Collapse

http://users.csc.calpoly.edu/~jdalbey/SWE/Papers/att_collaps...

reply

jcrawfordor 13 hours ago [–]

Quite possible though is a significant disruption of one of the many services like LNP which are implemented via SS7 and shared by all carriers - there is indeed a complex set of inter-dependencies between carriers that are all somewhat generically referred to as part of the SS7 system, several of which are required to successfully set up a call or deliver a text message.

reply

bogomipz 12 hours ago [–]

All the major carriers maintain their own local LNP database. The only updates that would be distributed via a third party(NPAC) would be recently ported land lines.

reply

▲ numpad0 11 hours ago [–]

What about number transfers? Some MNP implementation rely on the original Home Subscriber Server the number was issued in or something, so there could be paths between core networks among major carriers.

e: already addressed, sorry

reply

▲ pdxandi 15 hours ago [–]

The article seems ti suggests calls and texts to T-Mobile are failing so customers from other providers are likely reporting issues unaware of the source.

reply

▲ pdxandi 12 hours ago [–]

*On mobile. Please excuse the typos.

reply

▲ digitaltrees 12 hours ago [–]

I have att, my wife has Verizon. Can’t call each other.

reply

▲ gamblor956 16 hours ago [–]

It's not TMobile. Messenger had issues too, even when accessed through the website.

reply

▲ zhte415 13 hours ago [–]

Messenger? Bloomberg? MSN? BlackBerry? ICQ?

reply

▲ burnte 13 hours ago [–]

These days it usually means Facebook Messenger. FYI, not snarky. :)

reply

▲ zhte415 9 hours ago [–]

Am not hip with that then. Deleted Facebook years ago.

reply

▲ systematical 12 hours ago [–]

Yes Facebook messenger did have issues as far as I could tell. I definitely refer to it as FB Messenger, not Messenger. It doesn't deserve the latter.

reply

▲ atlgator 16 hours ago [–]

Because they all run off a backbone operated by Level 3 Communications...

reply

▲ posguy 13 hours ago [–]

No, T-Mobile forces everything through Inteliquent (aka Onvoy/Vitelity) as of a few years ago.

They all likely share the same STIR/SHAKEN vendor, and Comcast is affected too (Comcast has working STIR/SHAKEN that interacts properly with T-Mobile and Verizon). Wonder if their shared STIR/SHAKEN vendor broke these calls?

reply

▲ bori5 5 hours ago [–]

Interesting had to search what stir/shaken was. Not obvious to the layperson.

reply

▲ Good_Karma 11 hours ago [–]

How about too many IMSI catchers being deployed at the same time ? Like basically ~ all of them at the same time right ? Couldn't that cause some unforeseen disturbances ?

reply

▲ Lammy 10 hours ago [–]

There was a major cross-carrier outage in 2015 too https://money.cnn.com/2015/08/05/technology/cell-phone-outag...

reply

▲ choward 14 hours ago [–]

NSA updating their taps?

reply

▲ 2trill2spill 11 hours ago [–]

Taps are passive they wouldn't effect traffic.

reply

▲ ISL 10 hours ago [–]

Unless they are people-in-the-middle.

reply

▲ arkades 15 hours ago [–]

Other services are reporting failure to connect when trying to reach T-Mobile. I was just trying to call a coworker w/ T-Mobile, and the error message I received was "Verizon cannot complete this call." (I'm on VZ)

reply

▲ badrabbit 11 hours ago [–]

I thought it was ddos? If not, I say it's china retalieting for huawei

reply

▲ StanislavPetrov 16 hours ago [–]

Could be something with 4g. My 3g flip phone is working fine (AT&T subscription plan - not prepaid). I can even receive calls from people on T-mobile who aren't able to call each other or other people (although they don't receive my incoming calls).

Another bonus for avoiding the spy phone.

reply

▲ ortusdux 17 hours ago [–]

Reports of a DDoS in progress: https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=23533350

reply

▲ Shank 17 hours ago [–]

There is no proof of a denial of service attack. Attack maps like the one you’ve linked to sinkhole traffic from botnets to known honeypots. The only way a DDoS can be identified is if you’re sitting on the transit links themselves or you have insight into the very private networks that the carriers have. Attack maps do not have this.

reply

▲ vokep 15 hours ago [–]

So attack maps are pretty much just useless PR gags? Thats what I assumed but wasn't sure if I was correct.

reply

▲ nmjohn 15 hours ago [–]

They are 100% useless PR gags

reply

kossTKR 14 hours ago [–]

"Wow look the US is getting attacked by everyone" - "lets make everyone pay for a black budget 5 trillion dollars cyber defence project".

Same old military industrial complex scheme with theater pretexts.

reply

kjs3 14 hours ago [–]

Useless? Not always...if they're well done PR they collect eyeballs. But yeah, all PR gags.

reply

SN76477 13 hours ago [–]

I have already seen infowarriors blaming Antifa.

Could be anything I guess.

reply

joecool1029 13 hours ago [–]

So many comments and noooobody knows how to search. I spotted it a few hours back, zayo fiber cut: https://tranzact.zayo.com/#!/networkStatus

Edit: Lol at all this nonsense 'Anonymous DDOS', BGP fat-fingering, NSA speculation. I got karma to burn from those butthurt at me being right about the fiber cut. Look at the timestamp and region! Look at this: https://bgp.he.net/AS393494#_graph4 Who you think AS6461 is?

EDIT2: Someone else might have been partially right about merger upgrades being a factor, perhaps removed some redundancy. Before I found the Zayo cut I saw that Crown Castle was looking weird overnight (they are #1 or #2 largest cell tower company with their own acquired fiber network, Lightower): https://map.internetintel.oracle.com/?root=traffic&country=U...

reply

adamfeldman 15 hours ago [–]

Update #2 from T-Mobile's President of Technology (3:02 PM PT):

"Teams continue to work as quickly as possible to fix the voice & messaging problems some are seeing. Data services are now available & some calls are completing. Alternate services like WhatsApp, Signal, iMessage, Facetime etc. are available. Thanks for your patience."

https://twitter.com/NevilleRay/status/1272650750665953280

reply

nabakin 15 hours ago [–]

Signal! I'm glad to see that one in there and ahead of iMessage no less!

reply

notRobot 13 hours ago [–]

The apps are listed in reverse alphabetical order ;P

reply

ankurkwv 18 hours ago [–]

https://downdetector.com/ looks pretty wild right now.

reply

Shank 17 hours ago [–]

This is a good case of causation and correlation being conflated. Of course T-Mobile users will report problems with YouTube even if it’s just their carrier. Any localized ISP problem will show up in outage reports for top websites because that’s what everyone uses.

reply

sjg007 16 hours ago [–]

I mean, the thing is.. they can all get to downdetector.. so :)

reply

mennis16 16 hours ago [–]

That is true but I will also note that Facebook Messenger died for me across devices (even on the browser regular Facebook was fine but my messages would not load), and the email discussion I've seen largely says something similar- only Messenger failing for a lot of people around the same time a couple hours ago.

reply

parsimo2010 17 hours ago [–]

The live outage maps are basically just this: https://xkcd.com/1138/

reply

marksc 14 hours ago [–]

5 of the top 10 states by population aren't on the cellular outage maps:

Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

reply

dleslie 18 hours ago [–]

Definitely screenshot worthy for posterity.

reply

LeoPanthera 16 hours ago [–]

Twitter moved really fast on this one, and not in a good way. 4chan created a meme map declaring that the USA was under a DDOS cyberattack, and all of Twitter apparently immediately decided that this was the truth - including some US senators.

(It does not appear to be a DDOS attack.)

reply

drunkcatsdgaf 15 hours ago [–]

youre doing the same thing. 4chan didnt create a "meme", the map youre seeing is from digitalattackmap.

reply

wybiral 15 hours ago [–]

How do people get digitalattack map to show today? I can only see yesterday on there and some people are posting images that say the 15th.

Either way, it's being taken out of context. There are always DDoS attacks like that. The past couple of months has had constant traffic on their timeline.

reply

drunkcatsdgaf 14 hours ago [–]

some other maps are showing the same stuff, but DDOS maps are inconsistent due to how the data is gathered. None of them are truely a panopticon.

I have my own theory that these sites are actually the ones astroturfing this stuff when services go down.

reply

jedberg 18 hours ago [–]

It's a good thing there are only three wireless providers so this was easy to track down. /s

reply

dehrmann 11 hours ago [–]

There were going to be three one way or another; Sprint wasn't a viable carrier on its own.

reply

DebtDeflation 18 hours ago [–]

I'm on T-Mobile and can confirm that I have been unable to make or receive calls for the past hour. Also, my home Comcast internet seems to be operating at dial-up speed and with insane latency. Something big is going on.

reply

▲ ngngngng 17 hours ago [–]

How about texts? My wife and I couldn't send or receive texts for a while earlier today.

reply

▲ edoceo 16 hours ago [–]

Three hour delay on texts from Twilio to T-Mobile. No voice connect from Twilio to Verizon, delayed and too.

reply

▲ burnte 13 hours ago [–]

Some were delivered immediately, some delayed hours, I know some texts were sent to me by my wife still haven't arrived at all.

reply

▲ DebtDeflation 14 hours ago [–]

A whole bunch of texts people apparently sent me ~4 hours ago just came through.

reply

▲ monadic2 16 hours ago [–]

Oddly I have both tmobile and comcast and was chatting on the phone around the same time—maybe it’s region specific?

reply

▲ novaRom 17 hours ago [–]

Are people still working from home in US?

reply

▲ monadic2 16 hours ago [–]

Depends who you ask.

reply

▲ DebtDeflation 17 hours ago [–]

Yes.

reply

▲ koolba 16 hours ago [–]

Fun fact: If your 2FA is based on SMS then you can’t log in until this is resolved.

reply

▲ partiallypro 11 hours ago [–]

Off topic, but I had 2FA setup on my phone for various things, and had it stolen overseas. I was able to lock the phone and erase it...but I was stuck overseas without being able to access anything or reset it. There has to be a better way.

reply

▲ 0xdeadb00f 7 hours ago [–]

TOTP with password protected key backups in the cloud?

(Bonus: recovery keys you keep offline, in your wallet or something)

reply

▲ mrgzg1 15 hours ago [–]

Literally wasted my whole day on this :(

reply

▲ acruns 15 hours ago [–]

typically you just disable the 2fa requirement until the issue is resolved.

reply

alanbernstein 14 hours ago [–]

If you can disable 2FA, without using 2FA to authenticate first... is it 2FA?

reply

deadwing0 14 hours ago [–]

Many sites give you a recovery code of some sort that you can use to disable 2fa in the event you were to lose access to your authenticator app or texts.

reply

adrianpike 14 hours ago [–]

Well I'm sure you'd have to enter your password to disable 2FA.

/s, obviously.

reply

JCBird1012 16 hours ago [–]

There were early reports that Level 3 was having some routing issues earlier today, but it's been confirmed that they're not having any problems whatsoever (for anyone who may have been suspecting that)

https://twitter.com/zackwhittaker/status/1272648878639255553...

reply

PascLeRasc 17 hours ago [–]

Oh, so that's why no one at my work can get on our VPN now. We need to do away with SMS 2FA immediately.

reply

goldenManatee 11 hours ago [–]

Advocate switching over to something Microsoft Authenticator or Yubico. SMS is unreliable and not transmitted in an encrypted fashion.

reply

vmception 17 hours ago [–]

Why are *you* using SMS 2FA?

reply

PascLeRasc 15 hours ago [–]

I use 1Password 2FA everywhere I can and choose services specifically for that reason. I just switched cell providers today because Verizon didn’t offer it. I don’t have influence over my employers IT though.

reply

hnrodey 16 hours ago [–]

T-Mobile user here, had to restart my device (iPhone) in order to make calls. The data network seems stable as I was able to FaceTime another person via the T-Mobile data network.

reply

tzs 13 hours ago [–]

Same here. Just read about this outage, confirmed I could not place calls. Restarted my iPhone, and now I can place calls.

reply

loughnane 16 hours ago [–]

My wife and I have T-Mobile and so couldn’t call each other... but we could over signal.

Not surprising, but still useful.

EDIT: if all the other comments are correct and this is _really_ widespread then I am a little bit surprised signal is working well

reply

▲ soheil 10 hours ago [–]

Come to think of it seems like telecomm companies have been elevated to the national security level of importance. I'm not sure if it has always been true, but with more and more reliance on tech that depends on these companies the danger is escalating. Does anyone know if these companies are vetted and inspected on any regular basis by government agencies the same way airlines for example are? A trivial mistake by one of these carriers can have dire ramifications for the entire nation as it seems to have been the cause of the current outage.

reply

▲ thebean11 18 hours ago [–]

Oh interesting, I couldn't get a verification code from Chase earlier today. Just tried sending a text to myself; I can send but not receive texts. That's pretty wild, it's been like that for >4 hours for me it seems.

reply

▲ tzs 13 hours ago [–]

I tried logging in to a couple financial sites that should have sent me text codes, but they did not even try. They just accepted my name/password and went to my account page.

I tried from a Firefox private window, my work Firefox profile (which has never went to those sites), a Chrome incognito window, and a Chrome instance being run under Selenium, so make sure I had no cookies from a previous visit to allow bypassing the text code.

So now I'm a bit confused. I hope the sites aren't doing something stupid, like associating successful text code verification with the IP address, and caching that on their end.

Maybe they've temporarily turned off requiring text codes to avoid locking people out during this outage?

reply

▲ serf 13 hours ago [–]

What's up with the networks that went down a few hours staggered from the rest?

Frontier Networks, Playstation Network, and Spectrum all went down early this morning; and I mean actually down. I had a Fingbox at my parents house tattle on Frontier Networks as soon as the connection got less spotty, and then the network dropped again.

The ISP/data failures are more interesting to me, to be honest, than the cell networks. I wonder if they're related. The cell networks all seem to share a lot of cascading failures, historically. It's intriguing that something is happening to affect the rest of the world.

The cynic in me says that someone just re-routed the internet through whatever new DPI-esque system is now in place, but I hope the reason for this mess is more innocent.

reply

▲ zarmin 18 hours ago [–]

Whatever is the source, I really hope it's not malicious. The US is vulnerable.

reply

▲ Someone1234 18 hours ago [–]

Considering it is impacting other non-celluar services (like Facebook), I'm guessing it is an internet backbone issue (e.g. bad BGP routing was broadcast?).

PS - This doesn't mean it is unrelated to the Spring/T-Mobile merger, they themselves could be the ones who screwed up routing.

reply

▲ lallysingh 18 hours ago [–]

My guess is it's some technical issue related to the Sprint merger. I have no data to back this up.

reply

▲ dogecoinbase 18 hours ago [–]

That is the current suggestion: https://puck.nether.net/pipermail/outages/2020-June/013124.h...

```
This is because of an update in the systems from the Sprint side t
merge with T Mobile. That happened from 12am-6am EST and Sprint's
clashed with T Mobile's. I'm glad I have off today.
```

reply

partiallypro 18 hours ago [–]

Based on how it has unfolded, I'm betting it's a cascading failure. Data seems to be unaffected, it is only voice.

reply

DebtDeflation 18 hours ago [–]

Uh oh.

https://www.digitalattackmap.com/

US and Brazil both under a massive DDOS attack right now.

reply

kelnos 18 hours ago [–]

If you run it back, it looks like that's been the case for at least a couple weeks now. I guess that's unrelated to what's going on today?

reply

t3rabytes 18 hours ago [–]

FWIW, that isn't showing live data -- it says June 14 at the top.

reply

krustyburger 18 hours ago [–]

A friend’s phone has been non-functional for hours now. With the size of the T-Mobile user base, this outage almost certainly has already had real human costs in the form of an inability to summon emergency services.

reply

zamadatix 18 hours ago [–]

Depending what is causing the outage 911 may still function. Or it may not. Just spreading to not assume 911 is unavailable because normal calls don't work/your plan expired/whatever else is going on as 911 gets a few special technical perks that make it available more often than normal calls.

reply

jaywalk 17 hours ago [–]

Exactly right. 911 calls are handled differently at almost every step of the process, starting with the handset and carrying all the way through to the 911 call center.

reply

dtmmax33 16 hours ago [–]

https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2020/06/15/cell-carr...

911 in Central Florida is having issues.

reply

e79 14 hours ago [–]

Priority access services like 911 are handled very differently. For example, I can’t place any normal outbound calls with my T-Mobile sim, but calling 311 in NYC works fine.

reply

jeffbee 18 hours ago [–]

Can't call from landline to t-mobile iphone, just dead air, not even busy/fast-busy/three-tone call fail.

reply

Multicomp 18 hours ago [–]

Same. AT&T to T-Mobile line. Dead air, insta hang up.

Signal messages appear to be unaffected so far, so one more anecdote that data works, but IDK if they were delivered to my group warning them about this via cellular data or wifi.

reply

▲ sbierwagen 17 hours ago [–]

Called from ringcentral voip to t-mobile phone on UMA. Rang once, then dead air. Disabled wifi to shut off UMA for a second try, rang a few times then went to busy tone.

reply

▲ jaden 18 hours ago [–]

Several other networks are showing up on downdetector.com too, including Sprint, U.S. Cellular and Consumer Cellular.

reply

▲ glitcher 18 hours ago [–]

Can confirm in AZ. My wife and I are on T-Mobile and are unable to call each other, with both of us at home.

reply

▲ atlgator 16 hours ago [–]

I know this is the digital age but you could just try speaking to her directly. /s

reply

▲ glitcher 16 hours ago [–]

Then how would she ever find her phone? ;)

reply

▲ 737maxtw 16 hours ago [–]

Can confirm, buying my significant other an iWatch cleaned up my call history from that point forward considerably.

reply

▲ elliekelly 15 hours ago [–]

The Find My iPhone feature of the Apple Watch is the best thing ever. I don’t know why Apple doesn’t advertise it.

reply

▲ binarymax 17 hours ago [–]

Same issue in NY. Can't get in touch with my wife, but she's out. Voice and Text not working. Can't get through to her at all.

reply

▲ mech422 18 hours ago [–]

Wierd...I'm in mesa and just got a call from San Tan on my Cricket phone.

reply

▲ cbsks 16 hours ago [–]

Cricket uses the AT&T network so they shouldn't be affected by this.

reply

▲ joezydeco 18 hours ago [–]

TMO down in IL for voice but data is working.

reply

▲ jdofaz 17 hours ago [–]

I called my t-mobile number and got a busy signal, haven't heard that in a while.

reply

▲ newman8r 18 hours ago [–]

Perhaps incidents like these will increase the popularity of amateur radio. I'm curious if there's any studies on the potential impacts of the US carriers begin down for a day or a week or more.

reply

▲ EvanAnderson 17 hours ago [–]

I'm curious how many other people share my ambivalence toward amateur radio? I want to be interested in it, but since encryption is forbidden I can't think of very many things I'd really want to use it for, what w/ being unable to trust the authenticity of transmissions and having no confidentiality.

I enjoy *listening* to stuff w/ my RTL-SDR rig. I also find the emergency communication capability that radio amateurs provide a Good Thing(tm). I just can't see what, personally, it could possibly be useful for.

reply

▲ bluGill 16 hours ago [–]

Talking about what gear you each have. There is a reason that is most of the conversations on amature radio : it is the only thing that you can safely talk to strangers about.

reply

▲ Jach 16 hours ago [–]

Some of us appeared in https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=20335110

reply

▲ xxpor 15 hours ago [–]

You can sign stuff just fine. Authentication != encryption.

reply

▲ EvanAnderson 14 hours ago [–]

The last that I'd explored amateur radio I thought digital signatures were still a grey area. Good to know they're not. That does increase the usefulness dramatically.

reply

▲ xxpor 12 hours ago [–]

No, not at all. The only thing that's prohibited is encoding your message as to obscure its meaning.

reply

▲ reaperducer 18 hours ago [–]

No need to study anything more than a newspaper archive. Look at the local papers every time a hurricane hits the United States, or there is another major natural disaster over the last 80 years.

Ham operators are always a communication lifeline in times of crisis.

reply

▲ pixelface 17 hours ago [–]

feeling pretty good about the fact that some friends and i decided to get our licenses early into quarantine via remote online testing. highly recommend it if you're interested, some people are not aware of the fact that morse code requirements were dropped long ago and the question pool is available from a number of excellent study help sites (hamstudy.org is what I used).

reply

▲ Multicomp 18 hours ago [–]

My hope is for someone to complete a smartphone-based ad hoc mesh network that can use bluetooth, wifi to pass messages along, up to 6 hops or similar.

Currently, the closest thing I'm aware of for that is cwtch which is a ricochet.im rewrite

reply

▲ WrtCdEvrydy 18 hours ago [–]

There was one out there for Android that worked great.

I wanted to build my own for emergency services and we figured out how to do some of the mesh routing but it didn't go far... WiFi Direct unfortunately only allows you to pair to one phone at a time (while bluetooth allows endless pairing outside of BLE)

reply

pixelface 17 hours ago [–]

this already exists in some forms [1] on top of the fact that amateur radio in general is quite capable of moving data whether by packet radio [2] (including packet radio BBS [3], things like hinternet [4], bbs over amateur radio, or plain old teletype (RTTY) as a means to operate access a console on a remote machine. there's a ton of interesting creative work being done in the space even though it isn't particularly mainstream-popular.

[1] http://www.broadband-hamnet.org/ [2] http://www.choisser.com/packet/ [3] https://www.scc-ares-races.org/data/packet/index.html [4] https://www.kqed.org/quest/8440/ham-radio-helping-to-build-a...

reply

thephyber 13 hours ago [–]

FireChat and Bridgify have both been used during the Hong Kong protests.

It looks like Brigify[1] does support multiple relay hops on a bluetooth mesh network to send a message.

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridgefy

reply

elliekelly 16 hours ago [–]

I have no idea what it’s called but when I was in Cuba 5 or 6 years ago they used something like this on their mobile phones. They basically had an “internet” via bluetooth but without needing to connect to the “real” internet which was very expensive and monitored by the government.

reply

> adrianpike 14 hours ago [–]
>
> SNET, it seems. Awesome!
> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_in_Cuba#SNET
>
> reply
>
> > pubutil 14 hours ago [–]
> >
> > Cuba is amazing at making the most of what they have. I hadn’t heard of SNET before this, but I know they’ve kept classic cars running for decades out of necessity
> >
> > reply
> >
> > > elliekelly 11 hours ago [–]
> > >
> > > I am not exaggerating in the slightest when I say that Cuba must have the highest concentration of “hackers” of any place in the world. We were on a bus going to the far west end of Cuba (where not many people travel to) and it broke down in the middle of no where and the bus driver managed to fix it with some scotch tape and a twisted up plastic shopping bag.
> > >
> > > I’ve been to 70 countries and the Cuban people are hands down the most entrepreneurial of them all.
> > >
> > > reply

jbj 18 hours ago [–]

I heard of a few, but havent tried them:

disaster.radio

serval mesh

meshtastic

a different and cool project worth mentioning, more for distibuting teaching materials as I understand:

othernet.is

reply

▲ rabuse 17 hours ago [–]

Just got a couple Baofeng's the other week to dabble in that world a bit.

reply

▲ jaywalk 17 hours ago [–]

Are you aware that it's illegal to "dabble" in that world without a license?

reply

▲ rabuse 17 hours ago [–]

Not transmitting; just listening and figuring things out before taking the next step. I'm well aware.

reply

▲ lozaning 17 hours ago [–]

For definitions of dabble that don't include transmitting, its most certainly not.

One of the best ways to get ready to take the Technician test is to buy a cheap handheld and figure out how to listen in on the local repeater. Being able to apply what you're reading in books to real world stuff is a fantastic learning opportunity.

reply

▲ kilroy123 17 hours ago [–]

Or Satellite communicators/phones. Iridium bypasses ground gateways when you commuicate from one communicator to another.

reply

▲ asdff 16 hours ago [–]

Or more likely: push people into whatsapp and voip

reply

▲ csommers 16 hours ago [–]

Doubtful, considering you need a license, equipment, knowledge, etc.

Chad and Karen don’t give two shits about it.

reply

▲ AznHisoka 17 hours ago [–]

DDOS is trending on Twitter now. Could it be an attack?

reply

▲ vsareto 17 hours ago [–]

That doesn't seem credible yet

https://twitter.com/MalwareTechBlog/status/12726471098339409...

reply

▲ adrianpike 17 hours ago [–]

Unlikely that an attack would manifest itself in this way. I think it's an SS7 screwup since it seems that signaling is mostly what's gone pear shaped.

reply

▲ LinuxBender 17 hours ago [–]

SS7 would not affect website uptime. All the carrier websites are having issues.

[edit] As others have pointed out, if b-number routing is failing, then their support sites would be flooded with people checking their account. So maybe the subscribers are in effect overloading the sites. That would make sense.

reply

▲ Rebelgecko 17 hours ago [–]

Couldn't that just be the result of tens of millions of people simultaneously trying to contact support?

reply

▲ LinuxBender 17 hours ago [–]

Could be. With SS7 outages, first things you would see is b-number analysis failing (call routing) and SMS text messages failing.

reply

▲ londons_explore 16 hours ago [–]

As soon as there is a service outage, all the users go to the carrier website to try to complain or log in to check if they've paid their bill, etc.

A website designed for most users to visit once per year when their contract expires likely won't scale to everyone visiting in an hour...

reply

▲ LinuxBender 16 hours ago [–]

It's a sound theory. Hopefully one of the carriers owns up to their site not having capacity and/or b-number routing flub.

reply

▲ jaifraic 2 hours ago [–]

So... it actually is a DDoS attack ;)

reply

▲ wybiral 17 hours ago [–]

People are fearmongering and sharing pictures of DDoS activity out of context. There are always attacks like that going on in the background, it doesn't mean that's the cause.

reply

▲ supernova87a 17 hours ago [–]

Just to be clear, this is only happening to POTS (?) dialing phone numbers, is that right?

It shouldn't (or doesn't) affect Skype/Whatsapp/iMessage/Facetime/etc types of data calls does it?

Or is it T-Mobile, Verizon, AT&T *subscribers* and their phones, cellular phones + data connections?

reply

▲ jabedude 17 hours ago [–]

> It shouldn't (or doesn't) affect Skype/Whatsapp/iMessage/Facetime/etc types of data calls does it?

Anecdotally, this is correct. I was unable to place a normal call today, but was able to Facetime the other device.

reply

▲ guerrilla 17 hours ago [–]

It seems to be effecting other things? https://downdetector.com/

reply

▲ SSLy 18 hours ago [–]

Facebook is experiencing issues regarding chat (including on Instagram) in Europe too. Might be related?

reply

▲ coronadisaster 17 hours ago [–]

The NSA implemented a new system?

reply

▲ acruns 15 hours ago [–]

it would more likely be that one of their systems being down would cause this ;)

reply

▲ coronadisaster 13 hours ago [–]

either way, it is very suspicious

reply

▲ mke 13 hours ago [–]

The worst part: we have to wait 5 years to hear about this on Darknet Diaries!

reply

▲ _sbrk 10 hours ago [–]

Ijit Pai is on the case. Everything will be better soon.

The current FCC leadership is about as inept as the Fed, except that they're not ashamed to admit they're selling out to carriers.

reply

▲ hindsightbias 14 hours ago [–]

The test before the storm

reply

▲ kossTKR 14 hours ago [–]

Why are so many people in this thread sure that this is "just Sprint merger mishap" when i and many others have been unable to use Facebook Messenger and Instagram chat in Europe?

What does those services have to do with US cellular networks?

reply

▲ mynameisvlad 13 hours ago [–]

Exactly, what *do* those services have to do with US cellular networks? Nothing.

Hence why nobody is talking about them in this thread.

reply

▲ kossTKR 13 hours ago [–]

I came here from the DDOS thread on the HN frontpage because Messenger was down (and instagram DM's), which i haven't tried before here in Scandinavia in my 10 years of FB. Same for my colleagues.

I see at least 3 other people mentioning it in this thread, and lots on Reddit and on Twitter in connection to these articles.

That for me was at least was at little interesting when the overall theme of this new "incident" has been "something large scale going on".

reply

▲ ohhhwell 18 hours ago [–]

Google Fi from iPhone to Android worked after a long delay. Failed the other direction :|

reply

▲ peter_d_sherman 11 hours ago [–]

What might be needed is something like voice-packet across voice-network tracing/logging... sort of like, given a voice connection ID, tag packets going through it in a certain way, when routers or forwarding equipment en route see this tag, then send back an "I received the packet at <timestamp>" message, or something like that.

If something like that already exists, then T-Mobile should know exactly where the network is failing, and why.

If not, then maybe it, or something like it would be good to have...

I have learned from many years of software engineering that a working system is NOT proof that the system will continue to work into the future, that good logging/tracing of all system components is a necessity not a nicety, and that if you can't tell exactly when/where/why/how your system failed within 5 minutes of looking at log files -- you need to revamp your logging system so that that becomes possible.

If it takes T-Mobile more than 5 minutes to accurately diagnose the root cause of this by looking at log files, then that is proof (to me, as an Engineer) that their logging system ranges from suboptimal to non-existent, and that fixing that so that this never happens again (via fixing their logging system) -- should be their absolute first corporate priority -- after whatever is causing this is fixed.

Just one man's opinion.

I will now entertain disagreements and flames...

reply

▲ blakeg 13 hours ago [–]

Major ddos attack

reply

▲ ourcat 15 hours ago [–]

DDOS Attack apparently. https://twitter.com/OutageAlert2020/status/12726387880119951...

reply

> ▲ ourcat 31 minutes ago [–]
>
> Confused why this got -4 on it?
>
> Is linking to graphs about the issue frowned upon here?
>
> When submitted, it looked quite relevant to the discussion within the minutes beforehand.
>
> reply